



THE PROPOSAL DEBRIEF



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings GMC Members!

Wow...I can hardly believe the 4th of July is upon us. What a roller coaster of a year it's been...and not the fun kind like we have at Cedar Point here in Ohio (which still hasn't reopened due to Covid-19). When we published our Q1 newsletter, phrases like social distancing or flatten the curve, and things like hand sewn facemasks or worldwide toilet paper shortages were not on the radar. My how things have changed. This is not the world we knew from six months ago.

Even through a worldwide pandemic, GMC's commitment to our members continues. We understand the impacts of Covid-19 reach beyond social isolation and are affecting our members in a variety of ways, from adjusting to remote working conditions, sometime with children at home adjusting to virtual school, to job loss and beyond. We continue to implement educational programs through our [monthly webinars](#), our [GMC Book Club](#), or our [Certification Study Group](#), to offer networking through the [Consultant's Virtual Networking Group](#) or virtual [member meetups](#), and to continually assess how to support you even in times of great stress and need.

To that end, we're pleased to be able to support our members in a different way through our [GMC Gives Back program](#). The GMC Gives Back committee recently launched two important initiatives we hope will help our members get through these tough times. The Membership Stipend provides financial assistance to existing members to keep their membership active or helps new members obtain membership. Also, through GMC Gives Back, we are offering resume review services for anyone looking for a new job or simply wanting a resume refresh. We've also added our [Dear GMC Column](#) to our website blog to help address any proposal related questions you may have.

We hope you and yours are safe and healthy. We hope despite these challenging times, you feel supported and continue to engage with us and each other. We welcome your thoughts, contributions, and feedback at any time.

Stacey Duwe, CP APMP | Chapter President

NEW INITIATIVES HOW CAN YOU HELP?



Dear GMC

Have you found yourself in a tricky situation or need some proposal-related advice? Send in your queries to Dear GMC and receive proposal best practices and lessons learned from seasoned professionals. Read the column, and other great articles, on the [GMC Blog](#).

Submit your questions to [Dear GMC here](#).



GMC Gives Back

With more than 650 members across 12 states, our chapter aims to engage all members and enhance professional development. We recently launched two new programs to help our members during these challenging times.

Find out more on page 10 or [visit our website](#).

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UPCOMING EVENTS <<

- » Virtual Chicago Meetup | Tuesday, July 7th at 5:00 pm
- » Virtual Networking Group (VNG) Virtual Coffee Chats | 9:30 am CT July 8, 22
- » APMP "Winning Business Virtual Experience" | July 22 - 23



Defining Your Value:

What to do when you feel like your efforts aren't paying off

Written By Kati Stutsman

Whether it's due to pandemic furloughs, changes in your industry or company culture, or dissatisfaction with your career trajectory, sometimes we find ourselves in one of two positions of doubt:

1 – Does my company understand the value I add?

2 – Do I like where I am right now?

Note: this doesn't always translate to happiness with your role, supervisor, or coworkers. This could be measured by where you're at on a long-term career path or your work/life balance, etc. Those questions can be hard to answer and it can be scary looking beneath the surface to really examine what is lurking – especially in uncertain times.

It's important to know (and really understand) that we all have value. No matter your industry or role or employment status... you matter. But just like companies, we are our own brands and sometimes the message we want to give isn't the one being received. This can lead to a mismatch between our expectations and those of our companies or perspective employers.

Step 1: Define your value

You should be constantly evaluating your skill set, strengths, and personality traits to understand what you do best. This is the backbone of the value you bring to the job marketplace and nobody has the exact same combination as everyone else. Think of this as the “about me” section of a resume. If people

love working with you, why is that? What about your work style allows you to multi-task or wear multiple hats? Being able to articulate why you're valuable to an employer can make it easier to translate that value into compensation or justification for promotion.



PRO TIP: if you're employed and feel like you're being undervalued, schedule time to speak with your boss.

Come prepared with talking points. Sometimes managers don't realize their employees have questions or feel doubt. Or maybe they do realize it and have plans in the works that they haven't communicated with you yet. If you're in the market looking for a new job, drafting a value statement will help prepare you for interviews or possibly help you restructure your resume to better focus on what you do well and how that could benefit an employer (aka think of your resume like a proposal).

Step 2: Identify opportunities to grow


Value isn't a static thing. It constantly changes to adapt to emerging needs. Look at the current COVID-19 pandemic, for example. None of us really know what the employment landscape is going to look like on the other side of this thing. Employers' needs are going to be drastically different based on new regulations, social distancing guidelines, economic fallout, and impacts to budgets. This is a good opportunity to self-reflect on what you offer and identify opportunities to grow.



Defining Your Value:

What to do when you feel like your efforts aren't paying off (continued)

If proposal management is a career path you want to continue to pursue, consider becoming [APMP certified](#). Check out online resources like [LinkedIn Learning](#) (previously Lynda.com) for software training courses to help strengthen your skillset or learn new tricks. Reputable institutions like [Cornell University](#) offer self-paced professional development courses taught by industry experts. And if you don't have the budget or access to funds for paid programs, dozens of free instructional videos can be found on YouTube (check out these design tutorials from [Gareth David Studio!](#)).

 **PRO TIP:** if you learn a new skill, show it off! Let your boss know that you've taken a new course or received a new certification. Some employers, even in times of crisis, will reimburse the cost of job-applicable education. Make sure your colleagues know about it too. If they see your new skill in action, they could advocate for you or include you in upcoming projects that could open new career paths.

Step 3: Practice self-care

You should value yourself. Take time to appreciate what you contribute and acknowledge the fact that you are important – to you, your friends, and your family. Hopefully to your boss or others in your organization who will go to bat for you.

If you're unhappy at work or are feeling undervalued, that stress undoubtedly seeps into other areas of your life. If these feelings also correlate to financial stress, you could feel trapped. Don't let doubt or uncertainty trick you into believing that you don't matter. You absolutely do. Your efforts count, even if they aren't acknowledged or compensated. Remember: employment is a mutual business arrangement. Employers are paying for your skillset, expertise, or insight.



PRO TIP: switch your perspective. Look at what you give to your employer as something you give to yourself instead. Every project, email, or late night is actually an investment you're making in your long term career. There comes a point, however, when you give more than you get out of your efforts. If you've reached that threshold, it's time to evaluate and re-assess if your efforts are being valued. You diminish your own value by allowing employers to abuse your time, skillset, or work style. Be your own advocate!



PRO TIP: even those of us who like and operate well under high levels of stress can only take it for so long. Don't forget to protect your mental well-being while investing in your career. A meditation app like Calm is a quick, easy way to force yourself to reconnect with just being human. Note: Calm has a free deep breathing feature that you don't need a subscription to access. Exercise is another great way to decompress.

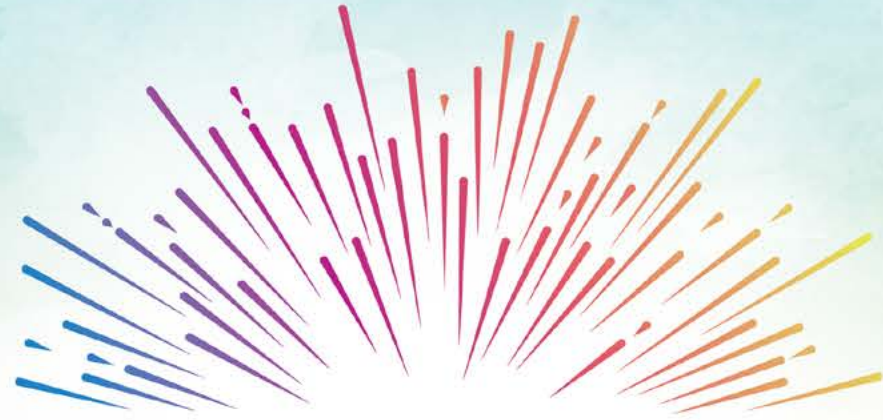


Are you up for the challenge?

Take a few minutes each week or month to sit down and reflect on your value. If you can answer those top two questions as YES (my company understands my value and I am happy with where I am), you're in really good shape. If the answer is NO, MAYBE, or "I'm not sure" – you owe it to yourself to question what you want out of life. We only get one shot! You deserve to be happy and feel like your contributions matter. There is no doubt about that.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kati is a certified proposal specialist in the Architecture/Engineering field. She leads the development of priority and strategic proposals in her office's Great Lakes region, which includes opportunities in Chicago, Indianapolis, and Detroit. Kati leverages her background in communications and journalism to identify and articulate solutions that meet client needs. Past experience in marketing content development, photography, and graphic design all play a role in her approach to creating dynamic proposals.



WINNING BUSINESS

VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

JULY 22-23 2020

JOIN YOUR CHAPTER

Have you registered yet for APMP's Winning Business Virtual Experience, July 22-23? APMP GMC will be there and we want you to join us! As an APMP member, your registration fee of \$500 has been paid for in full, thanks to APMP and its sponsors and exhibitors. This means that this experience is no cost to you!

This virtual experience will feature:

- ✔ Brand new professional development opportunities featuring a combination of top-rated and emerging industry speakers featuring brand new content
- ✔ Virtual networking opportunities to connect with chapter members and APMP members across the globe
- ✔ On-demand content. If you can't attend live, or miss a session, you can watch it later

REGISTER NOW



We asked and you answered!

GMC members share their work from home Setup



The best thing about working from home is my dog. It makes me so happy to peek over my desk and see her snoozing. If you look closely you can see her in the picture! One benefit of this WFH situation is that our team has been able to tackle projects that had previously been sidelined like digging into our proposal content repository (we call it our knowledge library), reviewing response data and making updates as needed. It's been really interesting and now we'll be even more prepared, efficient and effective.

- Bethany Runyon



I've been working from home the last four years, so overall it's been a business as usual work environment for me. If I can pick two blessings out of this 'new normal', I think the first is that it's ok to say that the WFH stigma has safely been erased. The other blessing is I have the best coworker – a life coach SME! Hutson reminds me when it's time to get up and stretch mid-morning and when to take a lunch break, and of course when it's 3 p.m. treat time. Plus, he's obsessed with my office shredder so I have a personal Info Security Officer at home.

- Bette Sturino



What's your top tip for working from home?
My top tip: Working from home is a balance, be sure to allot time for work and for relaxation. I make sure that I spend some time with my four-legged co-workers and keep some treats for them at my desk. They are excellent sounding boards when formulating ideas.

- Sonali Oberg



The best thing about working from home for this extended period is that my wife gets to see me a lot more – and vice versa. Normally I leave the condo at 6 in the morning at drive to a commuter train, and I don't get back until about 6:30 p.m. Our cute calico cat, Cali, is thrilled that she gets to come into the den and say hi to me while I'm working, get some attention, etc. Sometimes she even tries to help me with my work – it has to be purr-fect, apparently!

- Paul Lockwood

We asked and you answered!

GMC members share their work from home Setup (continued)



If I'm not working in our office, I'm working in another firm's office or the airport. The deadlines haven't slowed down but it is nice to take back the time I spend commuting and traveling. My WFH space includes a trio of succulents I bought from a local small business, some leftover social distance birthday balloons, and above the window are my daily post-it drawings. My sister is an artist and paints daily, and suggested creating a picture each day.

- Christine Sowinski



What is your top tip for working from home?

My top tip for WFH is to be intentional about scheduling your work day. Time tends to blend together when there is no separation from home and work. At first, I found it extremely difficult to stick to a schedule and would often end up working extra hours, losing track of time. I found that using time management and organization apps have really helped keep me balance and plan my day. I've also set reminding in my calendars for lunch, walks, and other items so I don't lose track of time. Lastly, when the end of the day comes around, I am very intentional about creating a hard stop...after all, we all know it's not going anywhere!

- Courtney Dufour



What is the best thing about WFH? *Pajamas... all day (when you feel like it). Just kidding...okay, only a little. Pajamas are great, but I really love no commute!*

What is your top tip? or What is something positive or a benefit that has resulted from your WFH situation?

Top tip is try to maintain a work/life balance and set boundaries for yourself with your work day. When you're working from home it's really easy to work a whole lot more than you should!

- Stacey Duwe

What have GMC members been up to during quarantine?

I enjoy a good book and discovered the [Libby app](#). It let's me "checkout" ebooks and digital audiobooks from the public library - for free! [Epic](#) is like Netflix for books geared towards adults and kids.

My friend turned me on to watching [livestream web cams](#) in national parks. It's so cool watching bears fishing at Brooks Falls.

Are you maxed out on Netflix shows and looking to learn a new skill? Try [SkillPop Anywhere](#) to enroll in affordable classes on topics ranging in Cookie Decorating, Crayola Calligraphy, How to Buy a House, and Budgeting like a Boss.

Personally, I love cleaning. I know this makes me a weirdo but cleaning gives me a sense of accomplishment and makes me happy. Check out the bestselling author and star of Netflix's hit show, "[Tidying Up With Marie Kondo](#)," and see how you can let go of clutter that no longer "sparks joy" in your household.

I recently came across this awesome list of [100 fun things to do at home](#) - especially if you miss traveling.

We asked and you answered!

GMC Members share their Work from home Setup (continued)



What is the best thing about WFH?

I tend to get more work done at home and my breaks are much better because my wife (and guitars) are here.

What is your top tip?

Let your family (or roommates) know when you are working and shouldn't be disturbed. If the door to my office is shut, that means I'm busy.

What is something positive or a benefit that has resulted from your WFH situation?

I love how people are finding humor in these times and mostly coming together.

- Bruce Farrell



What is your top tip?

Interestingly enough, prior to the times of COVID, I was permitted to work from home two days week. When I would work from home (on the rare occasion), I would set shop either on my coffee table or kitchen table. Once we were all sheltering in place, working from home became the norm and I quickly learned that having a dedicated space would make a HUGE difference. Now that I have a designated space, it helps break up the day and makes 'going' to work, feel like going to work. Additionally, I have been able to make the space my own in way that makes me feel comfortable, creative, inspired and productive.

- Jessica Couloute



Mary Frances Pokrzywinski shares her work from home setup.

Embracing the New:

Starting a new job during a global pandemic

Written By Nichole L. Reber

I work for an architecture/engineering firm in a small office in Chicago's Loop. But my boss isn't here. Neither are half the people I work with. They're spread across 40 offices and two countries. On the day Chicago's shelter in place mandate began, I started a new job. Thrown into a virtual week of training, instead of onboarding in the Park Avenue office in New York City, I was still able to build relationships and rapport with new colleagues from coast to coast. How? Sitting in my 1942 Modernist desk in Chicago with my two black cats on either side, here are some ways I achieved just that:

Building bonds. We spend more hours of our lives with colleagues than with our own partners, so get to know your colleagues' personalities and work styles. Generate small talk before Skype training sessions and observe how they conduct the training: are they open to your questions, did they initiate this part of their job, are they the expert in this part of your job? Reaching out to people other than your immediate supervisor lets you get to know how the department and the company works. Then ask those people if they can recommend someone for you to learn more from. Think about hosting a happy hour meet and greet or virtual trivia night to meet your new colleagues.

Who's who. Who does a lot of talking in meetings? Who comes up as an expert or a power conduit in conversations or in documents? That's a person to get to know and learn from. Could that person be your next mentor? Speaking of mentors...

Get a mentor. Getting involved in a professional organization like APMP, can help you during the transition process if working virtually is new to you. The [APMP GMC Virtual Consultant Networking group](#) is a great resource to turn to (find them on Facebook!). Find a mentor internally as well. It's crucial to have a resource who understands the cultural nuances of the company and provide insight during the learning period.

Get feedback. Not just from your boss but also from your colleagues. This should begin within your first 90 days. Ask for input on soft skills, online or in person training to deepen your knowledge of your job, and office practices/policies/politics.

Observe. Who handles autonomy and independence well during this forced WFH? Which of your teammates remains disciplined without imposed routines? Skype/Zoom/Slack activity reveals a lot about your fellow employees' skill sets. These observations will reveal tolerances and hot buttons, reactions to crises, and if they're one to round up the troops. These are when someone's DISC style or Myers-Briggs type becomes apparent. These, more than merely being good at proposal management, qualities exemplify why a person should get a promotion and which teams they'd contribute well to.

Leverage your strengths to improve the company. Find out your company's goals and missions and strive to help meet those from day one. You can do this by providing feedback on ways to improve processes and streamline proposal execution. In these times, cost saving approaches can be a game changer. Not sure what value you bring? Make sure you read [Defining Your Value by Kati Stutsman](#) to figure out what these are.

In this climate it's important to stay flexible and adapt to the changing environment. Take stock of the value you bring and look for ways to leverage those skills to build relationships and rapport across the miles. How have you flexed your in-office skills to adapt to this extended remote-work period? Did you develop new skills, recognize any gaps in your skill set?

Contact us and share your story!

About the author: Nichole is a happy participant in APMP GMC's mentorship program and amplifies her professional development through the University of Chicago's Conscious Leadership course. Come say HI! When you meet her at BPC on Nashville, where she used to live.



GMC Gives Back

APMP Greater Midwest Chapter is a collection of more than 650 members across 12 states. To engage members and strengthen our ties to our local communities, we identified and launched two programs to give back to the APMP members in 2020.

1 Membership Stipend Program

To help members and prospective members offset costs associated with APMP membership dues, this program provides a one-year membership for professionals who need financial support due to COVID-19 or other impacts. [Click here](#) to apply and review eligibility requirements.

2 Resume Review Program

We are providing FREE resume reviews for members. [Email](#) your resume and a reviewer will provide suggested edits and feedback within three business days. We will keep your information confidential and can not guarantee you will secure a job, but we wish you the best of luck!



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Call to Action

The GMC is looking for contributors for upcoming issues of the Proposal Debrief. In addition to providing informative and relevant content to our members, you can receive five Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for every article you contribute **AND** a \$10 Amazon gift card. Contact [Kat Becchina](#) for more details!

DON'T FORGET! VIRTUAL CHICAGO MEETUP

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 5:00 - 6:30 PM

We'll Discuss **LEADERSHIP**: the different types, which type you are, how to recognize your leadership strengths, and the difference between leadership and management. RSVP to [Nichole Reber](#) by July 6 to get the meetup link.

VIRTUAL COFFEE CHATS

Every other Wednesday in July, September & October

Are you a proposal consultant or interested in learning more about the consulting side of the industry? The APMP GMC Consultant Virtual Networking Group (VNG) invites you to join use on [Facebook for virtual coffee.](#)

UPCOMING COFFEE CHATS

9:30 am CT July 8, 22
9:30 am CT September 2, 16, 30
9:30 am CT October 14